

I. Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel

The book of Ezekiel is one of the major prophets in your Bible when it comes to the prophetic books. You have what they call the major prophets and the minor prophets. A lot of people think that they are called the major and the minor prophets because of their content, that a major prophet is a greater book because it says better things than the minor prophets. That is not true. In fact, the minor prophets are just as valuable and in many cases give you more detail about things than the major prophets do.

The reason why they are called the major prophets and the minor prophets is because the major prophets, take Ezekiel for instance, it has 48 chapters in it. You get a book like Obadiah, it has only one chapter. Jonah has probably five or six chapters. They are called the minor prophets because they are smaller in the number of chapters they have in them, not because the content is any less.

The book of Ezekiel to me has always been an incredible book. It deals directly with the nation of Israel. Historically, it is a great book that shows you why God took the nation of Israel and put them into captivity. It is one of the two books that are written during the 606 captivity, Daniel being the other one. In fact, when we read the book of Daniel and we know how Daniel was carried away into Babylon into captivity, the prophet during Daniel's time that is writing at the same time is Ezekiel. Ezekiel's book deals with the time during the captivity. Therefore, it has a unique aspect to it.

II. Outline of Ezekiel's Prophecies

As you come through it, in Chapter 1 and Chapter 24, he has a little division here that will help you break it down. You probably want to put these into your chapter here. I will just give you this because we are going to work our way to where I want to go, but you do not have a context. It is kind of hard to grasp from things.

- Chapters 1-24: Destruction and Judgment on Israel
- Chapters 24-35: Judgment on Gentile Nations
- Chapters 35-39: Restoration of Israel
- Chapters 40-48: The Millennial Reign of Christ

III. The Importance of Spiritual Growth

It is Chapter 47 that I want to draw your attention to because in the book of Ezekiel, and I just gave you an overall breakdown of the book, but in the book of Ezekiel itself, there are a lot of great lessons. A while back I was coming through and I was really studying something else. I

came across Chapter 47 and immediately God got my attention. I forgot about whatever I was looking for. He showed me one of the greatest things that I think that will really help you today.

We are talking about next year being the year of the Bible and really taking, and I have some things planned for the folks that I am working with one-on-one in the Bible. Many of you now we have been spending, we have spent four years together. Most of you know at least two years and some of you longer than that. I am always looking for better ways to help you learn the Word of God. We are going to talk about some of those things when we get into the first of the year. But as I saw this, I thought to myself, "Boy, I wish somebody would have told me this when I was a young Christian. I wish that I would have had the advantage that somebody could have broken this down and given me this. It would have really helped me a lot."

I know we all struggle. I do not think there is hardly a person in this church. I really believe what I am about to say. I know we all struggle and we all do some dumb things. I am the king of dumb things, so do not worry about it. I know we all go through tough times in life and we all have issues we have got to deal with. But I really believe what I am about to say. Maybe there is somebody in here and I do not know it, but I do not think, probably, I do not think probably there is one person that is in this church that does not want to do what is right. Now, I am not saying maybe you are here this morning and you are not right with God. I am not talking about that. I mean, we all have our moments where we are not right with God. I am not talking about that. I am talking about that deep down. I do not think you would be here week after week after week and put up with this verbal abuse if you down and deep down in your heart did not want to do what is right with God. Now, that does not mean you always will. It does not mean that you will not do some boneheaded things. It simply means that at the end of the day, down in your heart, you have a desire to be what God wants you to be. I always want to cultivate that. I never certainly want to do anything to hinder that. I always want to make myself available to be able to help you in all of that.

But it really comes down to this. The real key to your success and the real key to you having to getting the desires of your heart of serving God is you in your own relationship, not just with the Lord Jesus Christ, but with the Holy Spirit of God. I think the Holy Spirit of God is the great unknown person of the Trinity. We talk so much about God. We talk so much about the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not saying that we should not, but the real aspect of a relationship and you fulfilling what God wants you to do has to do with your own personal relationship, not just with God, not just with Christ. Those are very important, but you need to develop a relationship with the Holy Spirit of God because the Holy Spirit of God, the Bible says, is the one who leads and guides you into all truth. The Bible says that because you want to do what is right and I want to do what is right, we still struggle with things. The Bible says that the real way to overcome whatever you will have in life and get to where God wants you to be, and let us face it, that is the goal for all of us. The goal for all of us is to, when we get to the judgment seat of Christ, is to be found faithful. It does not mean that you will not have, like I said Thursday night, it does not mean you will not have some nicks in your armor. It does not mean that you will not have some chips out of your sword and shield. It means that you finish the fight. It does not mean that you will not get knocked down. It means you keep getting back up. It does not mean that you will not

fail. It just means you will not accept failure in your life. That is what it means. There is a difference between all of that.

When you begin to look at this passage here, I think it is one of the greatest pictures in all of the Bible that how you and I, and I am no different than you, I struggle with issues in life just like you do. I have my doubts about things just like you do. I have to deal with issues just like you do. But I think that everybody in this church, and that is why I love you so much. This is why this church is an incredible group of people that I could just, I have never in my wildest dreams thought that ever there could be a church like this. I say that from the bottom of my heart. If you do not know, I mean that, and I love you by now, you are never going to figure anything out in life. You better be careful crossing the street, you are going to get hit with a car. But that is where you are at. When I come to Chapter 47, you have from one of them spiritual lessons stuck right into a great doctrinal study on the millennial reign of Christ, you have one of the most practical, you have one of the most unbelievable spiritual pictures of how you and I need to grow to the place in our life where God wants us to be. This is the way it works. It breaks it down in the most. That is the way I got to do it. When I saw this, I thought to myself, "Man, I wished I would have had that 25 years ago." It may, but I want to give it to you today because this is a special day. This is a day that you made an effort to be here. I am not taking away from those that are sick or those that are elderly. I am not saying that at all. I am really not saying it to anybody. I am saying it to you, you made an effort to be here today. God gave me this a long time ago to give to you this day. I have never preached this message before. I have never really laid it out and given it to anybody. It has been one of those things that I kept in my own life, but I am going to give it to you today because I think not only where this church is at, but where you are at. I think this is going to help you today. I really do.

IV. The River of Life in Ezekiel 47

In Chapter 47, I want to read it here, Chapter 47, picking up in verse one, it says this:

Ezekiel 47:1-9

Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east.

Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the loins.

Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

Now, Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus today. Lord, I love these people. I do not think I have ever loved people in my life like I love these folks. I love each one of them individually. I do not love them as a group. I do not just know them as a group. I am not some pastor who just looks out and sees a bunch of blurry faces. I know these people. I know what they have been through. I know what most of their struggles are. I know, Lord, how that they are their ups and their downs. But, Lord, I know also that they love you. I know that they would not be here today, Father, if it was not for the fact that they cared more about their safety, cared more about the weather, cared more about your word and all of those things. They wanted to be here because they did not want to miss what God had for them. Now, Lord, you have got to bless that. That kind of faithfulness and that kind of attitude of heart. Lord, and yet I know that our older folks this morning, Lord, that they did the right thing by not trying to get here. I understand that. Lord, some of them are sick and some of them, Lord, it just that is just the way that it is. But I thank you for those that are here today. Lord, I pray that this message that you gave me a long time ago, that Lord, I have just kept, and Lord, that it will be a blessing to them today. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Let me go back just for a second here. I told you how that Chapter 40 through Chapter 48 all deals with the Millennial reign of Christ. Now in Chapter 47, here is what you have. I do not profess to be able to spend time today and take the time to lay out the millennium. But here is how, let me give you just a key component of it. This gets laid out through those eight chapters. When Christ comes back, He comes back and He sets up His throne in Jerusalem. There is a temple in Jerusalem. The Bible calls that the holy oblation. In fact, Larkin lays it out almost to every brick and every detail. I have never seen anybody lay it out as I said. But this throne in this temple in the millennium is right in Jerusalem. Right in the center of that is what they call the holy oblation. That holy oblation is the holy place. That is where Christ's throne is. He reigns from there over the whole earth during the Millennial reign of Christ.

Now the Bible is telling you that in this particular chapter that out of the right side of that throne comes a river. Jimmy Swaggart sings about it all the time, "There is a river that flows by the throne of God." I love that song. It is a song that talks about that the river flows out of the throne

of God. Well, that is what it is talking about here. That river flows out of the throne of God out of the right side. It comes down. Now remember the millennium is a thousand years where the earth has no more curse on it. There is no more bad weather. There are no more wild animals. If you want to have a pet tiger, you can have one. The Bible says that the little child plays on the hole of the poisonous snake and they do not bite you. There are no wild animals. You can have a big old grizzly bear if you want. You can have a mountain lion. You can have a tiger. You can have whatever you want. Because the earth is at rest, there is no more curse on the earth. So what happens is this, and there is no more curse because the Lord now is back on the throne and He has taken the curse off the earth. So this water of life comes out of the throne of God and it comes down. The first place it goes is in the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea, which right now is dead, hence the Dead Sea. It is dead because of its high salt content. You cannot drown in the Dead Sea. There is so much salt in the Dead Sea that you just would bob around and you could not even drown. You might wither up from all the salt, but you would not drown. But nothing lives in the Dead Sea. There are no fish. There is nothing. Well, in the millennium, when that water comes down, it comes down and it goes into the Dead Sea and the Dead Sea comes back alive. Then it moves down through the Dead Sea and it comes out of the south end of the Dead Sea and it goes toward the west end of the Mediterranean Sea and it moves on from there. The Bible says that wherever this river flows, the healing of God, it starts in Jerusalem. It starts with God and the millennium starts with Christ being on the throne and this river going out and never ending. This is where the Bible says in Isaiah chapter 35 verse 1.

Isaiah 35:1

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Right now, if you go over to the Middle East, you have a bunch of people who reject Christ. They have a bunch of people that call America the Great Satan. They think that they have the only true religion in the world and they are willing to kill you if you do not buy into it. I mean, they take a woman. I talked to a Muslim guy down where I work out this week and we were talking about, and he is a nice guy and he is somebody that he is halfway intelligent. It was during the time where they had that teacher over there that had the kids that named the teddy bear Muhammad. It was terrible. First of all, they wanted to put her in prison for 150 years and give her 40 lashes to beat her to death. Then when we put enough pressure on them, then they said, "We will not do that, we will just give her 10 days in jail." Then all of the Muslims are in the street, they want to kill her. He was kind of, he was not necessarily defending it, but he was not not defending it. I said, "You know what, let me ask you a question." I had just heard him in another conversation. I said, "Let me show you the difference between what you believe and what I believe. They are not the same." I said, "Let me show you how." I said, "I just heard you, here is a situation where your religion, here is a woman that named a teddy bear after your God and you want to kill her. I just heard you in a conversation with Tom over here and you were using my God's name in vain up one side and down the other. See, it is all right for you to take the name of my God, use it in every cuss slang word, you know what to say, and make it the epitome of something you want to wipe your feet on, and that is okay. I am supposed to deal with

it, but here is a sweet lady who by her own admission goes to your country to teach your kids who do not understand how to read and write and she calls a teddy bear a Muhammad and you want to kill her and you are going to tell me they are the same?" I had my infidel shirt on when I did that too, by the way.

When the Lord comes back, He is going to set the thing up right. Right now, you go over to the Middle East and you know what, you look at Saudi Arabia, you look at Pakistan, you look at Iraq, you look at Iran. Some of you have been over there in the military, you think you are living in the litter box. I mean, it is absolutely desolate. It is very obvious that God has His curse against the nations that want to go against His people. You claim to have all this great stuff, you want to kill everybody, and yet God has preordained and God has sentenced you to live in a country that you walk in kitty litter all your life. I mean, it looks like an ashtray, dirt, sand everywhere. But it is going to change when God comes back. Isaiah chapter 35 verse 1, when that river of water of life comes out of the throne of God and comes down through there, the Bible says when God's water of life, when Christ comes back on the throne, the desert is going to bloom like a rose. It is going to be a great time. It is going to be a great time. Of course, if you want to find out what happens to Muhammad and the boys and Big Mo and the rest of them, you have got to go over to Galatians chapter 4. That is called the football chapter in your Bible. Why is it the football chapter? Because that is why Muhammad gets drop kicked through the goalposts of eternity right there. Read it for yourself, do not take, I am not somebody just spouting off, that is what it says.

V. Water as a Type of Spiritual Truths

Inspirationally, you have one of the greatest pictures of your spiritual growth found anywhere in the Bible, getting past the river of sanctuary and all that stuff. Again, you will find that in Zechariah chapter 14 verses 8 through 9 and all of that. It is just incredible study from a doctrinal standpoint.

There is a real number one danger in your life after you become a Christian. It is a very simple thing and it is just so fundamental. It is so fundamental, it is so absolutely easy to understand, it gets lost in everything. The number one problem you have got to guard against after you get saved that will do you in every time in your life is when you stop growing spiritually. It is that simple. When you get out of the book, when you quit growing spiritually, when you, I heard a great pianist one time who was a great concert pianist, he said, "If I miss one day of practice, I can tell it in my play. If I miss one or two days in my practice, the music critics can tell it. If I take off a week from practice in the piano, everybody in the world can tell it." That is so true. The number one thing you and I have to guard against as a child of God is that we never stop growing spiritually. The older you get, the harder that is. You would not think that would be true, but it is true. The older you get, the more we get settled in our ways. The older we get, the more we think that we have arrived now and we do not have to learn anymore. There is a real danger in getting to be an older Christian because you think that you have got it together now that you do not have to do the same thing that the young Christians do. Boy, you get to that mode in your life, I mean, you may get to be an older Christian and you may do things, but if you ever stop,

ever forget the aspect that you had, if you have been saved 40 years, I have been saved since I was 20 years old and I am 57 years old. Let me tell you something, I look at my daily life with God and growing with God and growing just like I did the day I got saved. It has not diminished at all for me because I know how important it is.

When you come down through here, we have this water. Water in the Bible is a great study. It means a number of different things and it depends on the context where you are at.

- Water is likened to people. First of all, you will find in Ecclesiastes chapter 11 that water is likened to people. He says over in Ecclesiastes chapter 11, he says this: Ecclesiastes 11:1
Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. You know what he is saying? He is telling you that the Word of God is likened to bread and the water is likened to people. Isaiah 55 talks about that God's purpose never returns void. That He always accomplishes the purpose that it is sent. That the Word of God never returns void. So when He is telling me to cast thy bread upon the water for thou shalt find that after many days, He is telling me as a child of God, put the Word of God out wherever you go. Revelation chapter 17 verse 15 tells you that large bodies of water are likened to people. When you understand one of the ways that water is defined in the Bible, you will find out that you and me as a child of God always need to put the Word of God out wherever you are at. Cast your bread upon the water for thou shalt find it after many days. You may witness to somebody at work. You may tell them this story. You may give them a tract. They may ask you a question and you may give them your testimony. You guys that go down there to Preston, you know your testimony, you are down there and tell somebody what God has done for you in your life. You do not always see the results right then. I have seen situations where I preach messages and two or three years later did not see the results till two or three years later. You know why? Cast thy bread upon the water, thou shalt find that after many days.
- Water is likened to the Word of God. So water in one case is likened to the Word of God or excuse me, people. In another situation, the water is likened to the Word of God. John chapter 4 and other places. You know the story of John chapter 4, the woman at the well. The woman at the well, she goes down there to get water and she brings a pitcher because she is going to take the water home. Now the water that she was coming to get is a picture of the physical things in this life. You know why she had the, I mean, she could have just drank at the well, but you know why she brought a pitcher along? Because what she was drinking was not a lasting satisfaction. She had to bring a pitcher along to take more with her because one little stop at the well did not meet her needs of thirst. I will tell you something else. She probably came to the well two or three times a week. Why? Because the pitcher she took with her full of water ran out too. That physical water there, that physical water is a picture of the things of this life that will not satisfy you. So when Jesus wants to make a great parallel in the Bible, He shows up at the woman at the well with a woman and He says to her, "You need to drink a little water I got because the water that I got, you will never thirst again." Now that woman got saved that day. You know how I know she got saved? It is little things in the Bible like this. You know how I know that she was done with the physical things of this world and she now had the real living Word that was going to satisfy her for the rest of her life? You know how I know that she really got that? Because the Bible tells you that when

she goes, she leaves her pitcher. She is never coming back for the physical stuff again. You know why? She got the water from God's well that sprung into everlasting life that satisfies you forever. There is no coming back to that well. That well is inside you now. You do not have to do what she did. You do not have to go to the well, get water and you go home and then you use up the water, you come back. No, no, when she got this water, she just took the well with her. That well was inside her. So water is a type of the Word of God.

- Water is a type of the voice of God. Then you have water is a type of the voice of God. You find this back in the book of Psalms. You find in the book of Revelation, I think Revelation chapter 1 probably down around 13, 14, 15 someplace in there. This is where the voice of God is likened to a great powerful roaring waterfall. Have you ever been in Niagara Falls? You know they somewhat regulate Niagara Falls now because of the hydro plants and all of that, but it has been said that back in the days of the Indians, before they had all of this, that you could hear Niagara Falls, the roar of Niagara Falls 40 miles away, that it was just absolutely deafening and it is still pretty loud. Of course, we find that in the Bible the voice of God is likened to many waters.
- Water is a type of the Holy Spirit of God. But I think the thing that we want to talk about today is the fourth thing that you find water a picture of, and that is found in Ezekiel chapter 47 where I want to talk to you today. That is that water in the Bible is not only a type of people, it is not only a type of the Word of God, it is not only type of the voice of God, but it is a type of the Holy Spirit of God. In Chapter 47 of the book of Ezekiel, and this is where our study begins now, we find as far as I am concerned one of the greatest pictures anywhere in the Bible of how you and I should go through a process of spiritual growth.

VI. The Process of Spiritual Growth and the Holy Spirit

I think some of you sometimes, bless your hearts, you are too hard on yourselves. I do not know, I have been probably hear this 10 times a week, somebody will come over to see me or we will talk on the phone and you will be down a little bit because you think that you are not growing fast enough. See, I look at you and I think you are just moving like at light speed, but you do not see it that way. That is a good, that is a good thing. You never want to, you never want to say to yourself, "Well, I am growing too fast, I need to slow down." But you do want to say to yourself, "Well, I need to move on a little bit," and even when you are growing at your at the right pace, it is good not to understand that and I appreciate that. But you know what I want to show you today that growing spiritually is a process. Galatians chapter 5 verse 22 says, in fact, it says in verse 25, 22 to 25, it says:

Galatians 5:25

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Now what I am about to show you today deals with a great aspect with a lot of ramifications. There are two aspects of the Spirit of God that you and I should know from the Bible. One of the aspects is that when you got saved, you got indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. He comes and takes up residency inside your body. We call that the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. Now the other aspect is that once you are saved, you have to daily be filled with the Holy Spirit of God

for God to use you. This is what it is talking about here when it talks about walking in the Spirit. We call this the infilling Holy Spirit of God. You see, when you got indwelt by God the day you got saved, that is when the Holy Spirit of God sealed you unto the day of redemption. But when you talk about the filling of the Holy Spirit of God, it is you every day making sure that you are walking in the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God is you. This is why when we baptize people, maybe you never thought of it this way, we do not sprinkle when we baptize. The Bible says to me it has always been a very logical thing. The baptism in the Bible pictures somebody's death, somebody's burial. Now I have probably done as many funerals as I have weddings. When you bury somebody, never in the history of the world have I ever seen somebody when they were buried, you just stand a guy up and throw dirt in his face. You put him under. You immerse him in dirt. You put him completely under the ground. So when we baptize people, we understand that that baptism is a picture of somebody's death. We put them under the water. That is what it is all about. Not only that, it is a picture of what happened the day you got saved, that the day you got saved, God immersed you in the Holy Spirit of God. You got covered with the Holy Spirit of God the day you got sealed from head to toe. That is the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. When you got saved by one spirit, you are all baptized into one body and you got saved that way. Now what I want to talk to you about here is I want to talk to you about your spiritual walk with God and the infilling Holy Spirit of God.

Now the first thing I want you to see is look at verse 1 and 2 here. It says this:

Ezekiel 47:1-2

Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east.

Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

The first thing I want you to see is this. I want you to see that when this water comes out, it comes out under the eastern gate. That is very important because this water is a picture of you walking in the Spirit of God, getting to the point in your life as a young Christian that you go through a process to be completely, completely immersed with the Holy Spirit of God in your daily walk from head to toe. But the first thing before I ever look at this thing, the first thing I want you to see is I want you to see that it starts from out from under the eastern gate, from the east. That eastern gate is where Christ goes through. Of course, you know the story of the eastern gate. Around 1522, there was a Turk by the name of Suleiman, Suleiman the Magnificent, and he had taken Jerusalem and he fancied himself as the Christ. He knew the prophecies of the Jews how that the prophecy in Zechariah and Ezekiel chapter 43, Ezekiel chapter 44, how that Christ in the millennium was going to come through that eastern gate. So Suleiman the next morning is going to show to his people that he is Christ and he has made it known publicly that he is going to walk through that eastern gate and he is going to go out and sit on the throne in Jerusalem and he is going to portray himself as Christ, much like the anti-Christ is going to do here in a week or two. So what happens is that night he goes to bed and he has a terrible dream. Pizza and beer

before you hit the sack will never do it for you. He has a terrible dream and he dreams he walks through that gate and when he walks through that gate, he sees about a seven, eight foot tall guy there with a big burnishing sword in his hand and he just cuts him into little pieces. Of course, that person is the Lord Jesus Christ. It shook Suleiman up so greatly that not only did he not go through the eastern gate, he wanted to make sure his pride never got the better part of him. You know what he did? He walled up the eastern gate in 1522. So nobody would ever go through it again. You know what? It is still walled up today if you go to Jerusalem. You know why? Because that gate is reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ. When He comes back in the second coming of Christ, He is going to go through that gate, not Suleiman the Magnificent. When He goes through that gate, He is going to sit down on the throne and He is going to be crowned King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. So point being, when the water starts to flow out from under the throne, it comes out the eastern gate from the east, looking toward the east. It comes out that gate telling me this: before you can have any real relationship with the Holy Spirit of God, before you can have any real meaningful relationship, the flow of the Holy Spirit of God in your life, there will be no Holy Spirit of God on the flow in your life until Christ is on the throne of your life. It starts with that. It starts you recognizing that He is on the throne of your life. That He is the King of your life. That is where it has to start because that is where the water starts here and then it begins to move down through here.

Now the next thing I want you to see is this. I want you to see in verse 3 it says this:

Ezekiel 47:3

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

The next thing I want you to see is that there is a way to measure your spiritual growth. This man has a line in his hand and he is going to measure what takes place. What takes place is a picture of your spiritual process in your life and my life of getting to the place where God really uses you because you have the intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit of God and you are walking in the Spirit.

Now look at verse 3 again. When the man had the line in his hand, went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits and he brought me through the waters, the waters were to the ankles. Now what we are going to see here is a progression of a man getting into the water. The water being a type of the Holy Spirit of God. I want you to notice that when God brought this, and that is something else I want you to see. You notice how the Bible says here that the man brought him through the waters. He says that for the next three things. That is very important. It is God who is going to bring you into a fellowship with the Holy Spirit of God as you walk through the water. But he only goes into the ankles. I do not know how you are, but I have always envied people like this. I just, when I go to somebody's house or I do not know where it is at, I have a tough time getting into the water. I just, because it is just the contrast between being in a nice warm balmy sun jumping into cold water is just too much for my system. I am one of these and I try to disguise it that I do not look like an idiot, but I always wind up. You know, you do everything in the world. You will see me kind of moving in. It is okay, but when it gets up right about the nape

of your back and it starts being cold, you know, you just get in, the water is cold and you just kind of inch your way in. I even tried rubbing it all over my body, getting used to it. There is only one way to get used to the water. You know how that is? Just jump in. We use the expression, "You need to get your feet wet first." That is great advice for a Christian. You know what God starts doing with a man? He gets him into the ankles. He just gets his feet wet. This guy did not jump off the end of the pier into the river. You are going to see by the time we are done here, this is one big river. He got him in by the ankles and that is where he started. You get into the water inch by inch. He brought him through the waters and it shows that the beginning of you as a young child, some of you right now are right there. You are just walking in it. You are just getting into it. You just got saved in the last six or seven months and you are just walking in this thing up to your ankles.

Look at verse 4.

Ezekiel 47:4

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees.

The process of immersing yourself in the Spirit of God in this river of the water of life that flows out of the throne of God under the Eastern gate that wherever it goes, it brings about life, is a picture of you and I going and taking our time as He leads us through the water. It starts out with your ankles and now you are up to your knees. You are making the right progress. You are going the right way. The problem is that some people stop here. If there is any place that God's people are going to stop, it is going to be here. Most of them will go into their ankles and go to their knees. Years ago we went to Hawaii and we went a free trip to Hawaii over there and we were over there for two weeks and we had a great time and this was years ago and we were down on Waikiki Beach and all of the great beaches there and there were just hundreds of thousands of people there and all of them were just wading. You saw a few brave guys out there and they told us, "You know, this time of year the undertow is very dangerous so you want to, you know what you want to, you do not want to get in too far because you do not pull you out and you will not and you will drown." So there must have been, there must have been 10,000 people that were just wading along and I thought to myself once I saw this passage, I thought to myself, "Wow, is not that like a lot of Christians? You are going to play it safe, are not you?" Or you get into your ankles and you go up to your knees, but then you will spend the rest of your life just wading along the shallows. You will never get in where there is any danger of being in over your head.

You know what, you know that and I watched at the same time, I watched guys out there that were surfing and those guys surfboards were going up, being crashed into the gigantic waves and, and, and, and, you know what, and they would, you would see the board go up in the air, you would not see him for a few minutes and suddenly their little head would pop up and they just went back over and get it again. I thought to myself, "Now there is a guy that feels, I would not do that for anything in the world." Man, two things keep me, now I am not a waiter when it comes to God, at least I hope I am not, but when it comes to Hawaii, I am a waiter. Once I saw Jaws back in 1976, that ended it for me. I will not even get in the bathtub alone. I am telling you

the most terrifying thing to me is being eaten by a shark. Years, not years ago, but five or six years ago, I met eight or nine survivors of the of the USS Indianapolis. Anybody know who the USS Indianapolis was? Yes, it was the ship that was bringing the atom bomb to Tinian and it was such a secret mission that they never reported and they dropped the bomb off and were coming back and they got torpedoed. 1800 men, ship sank in like four or five minutes. 1800 men went into the water. Nobody knew where they were. Nobody got off an SOS when they were two days out overdue. Nobody thought about it because it was such a secret mission. Those boys were in the water for almost four days. 1800 went in. Little over 200 came out. Sharks took the rest. So I had to hear. Say you want to go swimming in the ocean? Yes, I will go. Give me a life back, an Aqua Lung and a destroyer. I will be fine. Not me, brother. Uh uh. And now the second thing I worry about is giant squids. You see that thing on TV the other night? You laugh all you want, Liz. Shark gave a bit of you. He would spit you out so fast you would not know what hit you. Them squids, man. Hey, in the National in the National Archives in Washington DC of Museum of Natural History back in the 1800s off Long Island New York, a giant giant squid was washed up dead on the shore. They did not keep it, but as they keep things, they cut off a section of one of its, one of his arms and it is still in the National Historical in Washington in the Museum of Natural History. By the length of that tentacle of that arm, they say that squid was over 100 feet long. Now I do not know if you know how squids eat you and I do not know if you care. Maybe it is more information than you need. I am not giving them the chance. I mean them squids, they are terrible. They are the most, you think sharks are bad. You know the only, you know how big whales are. Whales are big. You know the only natural enemy a whale has? A giant squid. Oh, not me. I am a waiter. I am a waiter. I am the only guy out there that is waiting up there here with an M60 machine gun belts, a hand grenades and the US Navy circling me with a helicopter. No way. I may die of a lot of things. I may die of a heart attack. I may die of cancer. I may die get killed in the car, but I will not get eaten by a shark or a squid. Take it to the bank. You got Lost Vegas next week or the next couple of months and go into the gambling casinos with a bid on football games. You can put your money down on my name up there. I will never get eaten. I will never, I am not going in. I am going to go in some of you people going cruise ships. That is tempting God. I mean what, I mean. Hey, the Titanic was the greatest ship that ever was built. You are going to go down there on a love boat. Not this kid. Guy making funny one time. I never been to Bible college. Said I did not know anything about preaching. I said to him, I said, "You know what?" I said, "Is not what you know." He says, "Oh yeah, it is." I said, "I will give you an example. I know that Bible college and being a professional will not do anything for you." He said, "What is that?" I said, he said, "Because he said I was an amateur." I said, "I will give you the greatest example in life. You know what, let me tell you something. You want to talk about amateurs versus professionals. The Titanic was built by professionals. The Ark was built by an amateur."

Some of God's people never get past the knees. They just wait, play it safe. You are going to find out that if you are going to get in this thing, this water is coming down through here under the throne of God and the progression is for you. You start out in your ankles. Do what you can do. Do not get in over your head. Do not go to church the first time after you get saved and make dumb promises of God you cannot keep. Get some help. Get somebody to disciple you. Get somebody to work with you. Get somebody to make sure you do not get in too deep, too far, too

fast. I mean my goal is to get you all to be excellent swimmers. But I cannot take and throw you off the deep end. You have got to go through the ankle. Then you have got to go up through there and you have got to wade into your knees.

Look at verse 4.

Ezekiel 47:4

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees.

We are going now. Do you notice he keeps saying, "He brought me through. He brought me through. He brought me through." Started out with your ankles. Now it is up to your knees. Now it is to your loins. Now you are up to here. You know what that represents spiritually? The Bible says in the book of Ephesians where it talks about the great armor of God, "loins gird about with truth." Ah, now you are getting your feet down. Now you are learning some things. Now the Spirit of God is around your loins. Now that is the strongest part of a man. You know when it talks about the Lord Jesus Christ back in the book of Song of Solomon. It talks about his the two most hardest elements. One is natural and one is from a human being. One of his got a belly like ivory and he has got legs like marble. You know why they make tombstones out of marble? Because it is the hardest stone there is. It will last forever. His legs are like marble. When you grow, you start out and you start out growing, getting into this thing, boy, walking into that Spirit of God. That is what the Bible says you have got to do. You have got to live in the Spirit and you have got to walk in the Spirit. That thing is a river. You are moving out through here and you start by your ankles. Then you get up to your knees. Now this is where exactly where some of you are at today. You guys have been hanging out with me for now two or three years. This is where you are at. You are up to your loins. This is how you get there. You went through a process of spiritual growth every day of your life being patient, understanding that Christian life is constantly moving into the water, not out of the water. Now you are up to your loins. Your strength is beginning to show in the Word of God. You have got a handle on your marriage. You have got a handle on your life. You have got a handle on your kids. You have got a handle on your beginning personal problems. You are beginning to show now your life is beginning to show that you are starting to operate by biblical principles. Of course, 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 13 adds to that and says, "gird up the loins of your mind." It is all about how you look at it. All about how you look at it.

Now this represents a man or woman's spiritual growth. As I said, so many of you are right here right now. Now I want you to get the picture here now because I have been saying a lot of things, but I want you to get the picture of this. This river is not some little little blue creek. This river is not even like the Missouri River because what transpires here, he says this. He said three times now, the ankles, the knees and now the loins. Each time he said that that man took him a thousand cubits. You know what a cubit is? A cubit is your distance between your elbow and your forefinger, about two and a half feet. By this time he is up to his loins. He is into this river over a mile. This river is more than a mile across. He has went 3000 cubits. He is in over a mile up to his loins into a river that is moving at a fast pace and almost will sweep you off your feet.

God wants to teach you how to learn to walk by faith and not by sight. There is nothing more scarier than being over a mile in a fast water without a big stick to find out where you are at. God wants you to start at your ankles and move into that water, Holy Spirit of God, to your knees and then up to your loins where you really have some strength for God in a fast moving thing where you are over a mile from shore and you have got a more than a mile to go. Just by blind faith, just keep moving into that thing because the man is getting you into the water. He is bringing you through a process. That man is the Lord. It says down there, "He measured again and brought me through the water." If you let God do it in your life, He will take you from the day you get saved. If you do your part, I do my part and this church does this part, God will do His part and He will bring you through the waters. He will do it.

Look at verse 5.

Ezekiel 47:5

Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

Now he is even more farther in. It was a river that I could not pass over for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. You know what? You know why it is a river not to be passed over? I will tell you why, because God never intended to get to the other side. This guy now is into the thing where he is not even touching ground anymore. Hey, that is the best place you and I can be in. You know what the survivalists say? Most of us will not do this. I do not need to do it because I am never going to get into water that deep. But what they tell you is this, if you fall into a water, our first thing is to panic unless you are just a cool or a great swimmer. But your first thing is to panic. The more you panic and thrash around, it makes you sink. The thing that you really want to do or the survival experts say is just to relax and just to lay back and just to, you will float. If you just lay there, you will float. And as the sharks come up and eat you, you will float. See? No, if you just relax, quit panicking and just, just lay there, if you are in a fast-moving river, it will sweep you along down through there. If you just take it easy, sooner or later, you will grab onto something or you will get out of the predicament you are in. That is great advice for a Christian. God wants you to get into the Spirit of God to such a degree where you are in over your head. He wants you in a situation that you are stuck, you cannot get out on. You cannot go back, you cannot go across, you just have got to go with the flow, so to speak. You let the current of that river, the force of that Spirit of God, and when it comes out of that thing and comes down, it is going the right direction, it is going to the west. It is bringing you down and you are just enjoying the ride. Do you ever see a man swimming? Do you ever see a man that was in water over his head? You realize that when you are in water over your head, you are in a situation where you have no control over it? That is where God wants your life to be. He wants to be in control of it. There is only one way that God can get control of your life and there is only one way you can give God control of your life and that is to get into the water so deep that you lose your footing and you have got to depend on Him to get you down to the end of the river. You ever see a man swim? All you see when he is swimming, if you are a distance away, all you see, when you see somebody swimming, all you see is his head. He is immersed from head to toe. All he is sticking out is he is treading water there. All you can see is

his head. That is exactly what you ought to be as a Christian because the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 3 that the head of Christ is God and the head of man is Christ. When you get into this river that is fast flowing that you cannot get your footing on and you are in the river, out of control and it has to take you and you get to that point in your spiritual life, all the world sees is your head, Christ. Oh, what an incredible passage. Absolutely incredible. When you get to this point in your life, you are where God wants you to be. That is the goal each of you should have. Each of you should have a goal to be out of control of your life and out of your mind. That sounds good, does not it? You know as a, you know when the world looks at you as a Christian, you know why they think you are nuts? You know why they think you are crazy? Because in a sense you are. Somebody said to me when I first got saved and got plugged into the Word of God, "You have lost your mind." I said, "Praise the Lord. Let this mind be renewed as it was also in Christ Jesus. I needed to lose the one I had." Somebody said, "Well, you go to that church, you are going to get brainwashed." Praise the Lord. That is what you need. Some of your brains are so filthy. They need a good washing this morning by washing every generation by the Word of God. You see, we get the thing all backwards. We get it all backwards. When you get to this point, you ought to be out of control. Your life ought to be no longer yours. You know why they think, you know why they think, you know what they, when the first thing they say, "You are crazy when you start talking to yourself?" Now, that is not for me to think it for me is when you start answering yourself. You know, that is the problem. But all my life I have heard, "Well, you know what? He is over there mumbling to himself over there talking to himself." You know, the whole book of Psalms is a whole book of a man talking to himself. You ever see that? You ever see it back there with Samuel and his mom, Hannah? You ever see back there when Eli walked in and says, "She is drunken." She was not drunken. She was talking to herself to God. I told you about the man a number of years ago. I told you this two or three years ago when I was back in Ohio. We had a guy in the church back there that everybody made fun of. Everybody laughed at him. I admit to tell you he was not the brightest bulb in the box and he had some social issues. But you tell you what, you never sell those people too short. I remember one time when I was coming out of the back of the church getting my car and I noticed him over there, I noticed him over there down on his knees and I thought he had fallen. I walked over to him and I said, "Tommy, are you okay?" He did not answer me. He is down there and I kind of went around. There was some shrubbery there and I kind of went around and he was down there on his hands like this and he had his hands like this. I looked over his shoulder and there was a little sparrow that had died there on the ground. I said, "Tommy, I said are you all right?" He says, "Shh, shh, Bob, be quiet." I said, "What is the matter?" He says, "Just give me this moment." He says, "God is here." I said, "What are you talking about?" He says, "The Bible says that a sparrow does not fall to the ground and my father does not know it." Now see, some of you think that is stupid, do not you? Well, you will see, you will, you, you, at the judgment seat of Christ it will be you here and him here. And we will find out who is stupid. You know what God looks at that? You think he thinks that is stupid? I will tell you what, boy. Do not sell them short, brother.

So, we see this thing where he starts out with the, with the, with the, with the ankles coming into this water, this river that you cannot get across. God has no intention of you getting to the other side. He is sending you in there, knowing you are not coming out. You are going to sink or swim. It is a picture of your faith and your relationship with God. It is a picture of the fact that you can

never stop growing spiritually. It is a picture of the fact that you have got to keep moving into this water. The place that you want to be is when you get it, you get swept off your feet. You cannot touch bottom and you are carried by the flow of that great river and it takes you wherever that river is going. You have got no saying it. You have got no control over it. You cannot stop and get off. You cannot turn left to the next corner. You are out of control. You are out of your mind. God's flow is just taking you where He wants you to go. That is why you are nuts. Pray for me, I get worse.

VII. The Results of Immersing in the Spirit

Now look at verse 6, 7, 8 and 9. I want you to see this and then I am done. I want you to see the end result. This is such an incredible passage. I want you to see the end result of you recognizing that this river flowing out of the throne of God, moving down to the Dead Sea and then moving east to the Mediterranean. I want you to see how it is a picture of you and as a young Christian. I want you to see how and I want this to help some of you. I want some of you young men to know that you are right where God wants you to be. You keep doing and keep the right attitude of heart. You will get there. It is not an overnight process. You cannot, I do not care what your name is, even if your Mark Spitz, you cannot swim this river. You cannot do it. You have got to go in by the ankles. You have got to go to the knees. You have got to go to the loins and then as He keeps leading you through the water. Oh, by the way, let us read verse 5 again.

Ezekiel 47:5

Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

He brought me through the water and He brought me through the waters and He brought me through the waters. What is missing? He does not say He brought him through the waters anymore. You know why? You get to that point in your life. You know why you are there? The mark of spiritual maturity is when He does not have to get you into the water anymore. You are getting in on your own. See, it is tough in your younger Christian life. He has got to keep, "Come on, keep going. You are into the ankles." "Yeah, I know, but the water is cold." "It is all right. Keep going while you are up your knees." "Yeah, but you see that big squid going by." "Shut up. Get out here. Get up here." "Now you are up to the loins. Yeah, this is nice. I think I am just going to stay here for a while." You know, but when you get in there and it is the same way with me, you will see me going around a swimming pool, dipping one toe in. Cool. Everybody else is splashing in and swimming up and down. Then I hate you guys when you come up and splash pee. That is why on the canoe trips, you can watergun everybody you want. You do me. You are out of the church. Keep your water guns to yourself. I just may find you a new holster for it. You guys are squirting everybody out there. I am kind of paddling along. It is a hot day. Nobody likes cold water on them when they are hot. You should, I do, that is my point. You have got something wrong with you. Then I am out there, you know, and it goes up to your back. I tell them, "Heads up." You can do whatever you want to do. You get me wet, you are in trouble. It is all you have got to say. See, they are not going to get me wet. So you know, I do not like it. I get out there. I am somebody's. "Oh, that is cold, man." So you sit down there. You put your legs in

first, you know, and you are pretending, you know, you are just kind of getting some rays. No water is too cold. I cannot get in, come a sissy. All right. I said, "Are you happy now?" So you get down to the kids and where they wade and I am down there taking water in my hand. Nobody is looking in on them. And you do one of these deals. Water is coming up, you know, you know what the best way you can do it and I do this now. I do once I get the nerve up, get a few beers in there. I will do anything. I get, you know, I just, I get on that diving board and I just run off in and down I go, man. You know what? In an instant, it is over. In an instant, the thrill of the cold or the water works through it. Then you are just out there and now you can do what anybody else does because it is over. Get in it, man. Get in it.

Because when you get in it, look at verse six, the results of walking and immersing yourself in the water, the Spirit of God, getting in it over your head through a process.

Ezekiel 47:6-9

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

You know what He said? He said, "Hey, let me show you one more thing. Have you seen this?" Now I told you, I told you about your ankles and your knees and your loins and now water is just swimming, but son of man, have you seen this? Look what He shows Him. I want to show you something. Verse seven, that He brought me and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. He said unto me, "These waters issued out toward the east country and go down into the desert and go into the sea which being brought forth into the sea all water shall be healed. It shall come to pass that everything that liveth which moveth which whoever the river shall come shall live and it shall be a great multitude of fish because the water shall come thither for they shall be healed and everything shall live whether the river cometh."

You walk down this river. We know what is on both sides, trees. Psalm chapter one says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Ezekiel chapter 47 right there. You want to be a tree planted by the river of waters that bringeth forth his fruit in the season? Let us see the fruit. When Christ becomes head of your life, when you have no control over your own life, when you have to go with the Spirit of God

and you are immersed in it and you go where He wants you to go, not where you want to go because you have ceased walking and you are now floating in the Spirit of God and walking with Him. I will tell you what, first thing that happens, your life becomes unexplainable. You become like a tree. That tree there gets its roots down and gets its water from the river. You will be like a tree planted by the river of water to bringeth forth his fruit in the season.

Look at verse 12.

Ezekiel 47:12

And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

You know what that tells me? That tells me once you get saved, you get into this thing, you never stop growing. That tree got new fruit every month. If you are not learning stuff every week, every month, God is not showing you every week, every month something new. Then God takes that fruit and it is for meat. It is for substance. It gives people something to eat and it heals them. I am going to tell you something. Oh, I know what this thing is doctoring. I got it down. But I will tell you what from an inspirational application, you have got to picture what your life, me and my life be. Christ ahead of your life. No control over your own life. Your life becomes unexplainable, multitude of fishes, dead thing get life from you. I want you to notice this. When you study this thing, that river comes out of that Holy of Holies called the Holy Ablation Sanctuary. It comes out on the east gate and comes down south at a Dead Sea. When it gets to the Dead Sea, it splits. That water goes there and then it goes to the Mediterranean and keeps on moving from there. You know what you just got? You got not only your own life here in Kansas City giving life to dead things, but it went to the Mediterranean and it went to the whole world. There is your missions program. You are not to be satisfied. We are not to be satisfied what we do here. You get the Spirit of God and you get immersed in the Spirit of God and you walk in the Spirit of God. It is a process, my friend, by which the Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God comes out of that throne. It comes down to your Kansas City, your job, wherever you are living and it changes everything there. Then it splits and it goes east and it goes to the great Mediterranean Sea and then it goes throughout the world. That is what it does in the Millennium and that is what it will be doing spiritually in your life and my life and the life of this Church. Churches are like people. Churches are like people because they are made up of people. What you got in Ezekiel 47, doctrinally you got the whole layout of that Holy Ablation with a Holy Sanctuary with the water coming out. What you got there spiritually is a picture of what your life and my life should be. I hope that every young man and every young lady that just is where you are at finding yourself in the Lord. Maybe you have been saved for just a short period of time or maybe you have been saved for a while but you just have never gotten plugged in it totally. Hey, I hope right now after the day you see and do not get too impatient with yourself, it is a process. You let me help you. Let me help you. Let me help you get to the ankles, get to the knees, get to the loins. Let me help you get out there where you lose your footing and you just get carried on. It is a process. It does not happen overnight. It will not happen in a week. It may not happen in a

year, but it will happen. But that is the process and that is the end result. God sends you into a river. He has no, He sends you into a river. He has no, no thought of you coming out the other side. Wow. He wants you to walk by faith not by sight. He wants you to let the Spirit of God immerse you not only as you were indwelt, but as you are filled. He wants this world to see you as a man going down the Missouri River at 25 miles an hour and all that you see is His head because your head is Christ.